WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   An image processing method comprising:

a first information extraction step of extracting first information, including a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of an image; and

a determination step of employing the results obtained at said first information extraction step to determine whether second information is to be extracted from said image.

2.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

3.   A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and

a selection step of selecting said block.

4.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information indicates that said image includes a specific image.

5.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said second information is additional information.

6.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

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7.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency, securities, a copyrighted image or others.

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8.   A method according to Claim 4, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

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9.   A method according to Claim 4, further comprising:

a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,

20   wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed based on said image.

10.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein said method is performed by a printer driver.

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11.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the

amount of said second information.

12. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

13. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

14. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.

15. An image processing method comprising:

an input step of inputting image data;

a block division step of dividing said image data into at least one first block, and at least one second block;

a block selection step of selecting said first block, and selecting said second block;

a first information extraction step of extracting first information from said first block that is selected;

an information extraction judgement step of
employing said first information to determine whether
second information is to be extracted;

a second information extraction step of extracting

5   said second information from said selected second block
in accordance with the determination at said
information extraction judgement step; and

a control step of controlling an apparatus in
accordance with the result obtained at said second

10 information extraction step.

16.   A method according to Claim 15, wherein said
first information and said second information are
embedded as electronic watermark information.

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17.   A method according to Claim 15, wherein the
amount of said first information is smaller than the
amount of said second information.

20   18.   A method according to Claim 15, wherein the
embedment depth of said first information relative to
said image is greater than the embedment depth of said
second information.

25   19.   A method according to Claim 15, wherein the
number of said first blocks is greater than the number
of said second blocks.

20. A method according to Claim 15, further comprising:

a re-extraction judgement step of employing the results obtained at said information extraction
5   judgement step to determine whether said first information is to be re-extracted.

21. A method according to Claim 20, wherein, at said re-extraction judgement step, whether said first
10   information is to be re-extracted is determined in accordance with the number times said first information extraction step is performed.

22. A method according to Claim 15, further
15   comprising:

a color spatial transformation step of employing the determination at said information extraction judgement step to perform a color spatial transformation, or a tone transformation step of
20   employing the determination at said information extraction judgement step to perform a tone transformation.

23. A method according to Claim 15, wherein said
25   first information is one-bit electronic watermark information indicating a specific image is included.

24. An image processing method comprising:

a first information extraction step of extracting, from an image, first information indicating that said image is a specific image; and

5   a determination step of employing the results obtained at said first information extraction step to determine whether second information, which is additional information for said specific image, is to be extracted from said image.

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25. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

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26. A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:

a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and

20   a selection step of selecting at least one block.

27. A method according to Claim 24, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

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28. A method according to Claim 24, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to

said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

29. A method according to Claim 24, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

30. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is an image of a paper currency or securities.

31. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

32. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency or securities.

33. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

34. A method according to Claim 24, further

comprising:

a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,

wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed based on said image.

35. A method according to Claim 24, which is performed by a printer driver.

36. A method according to Claim 24, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.